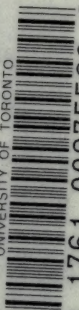


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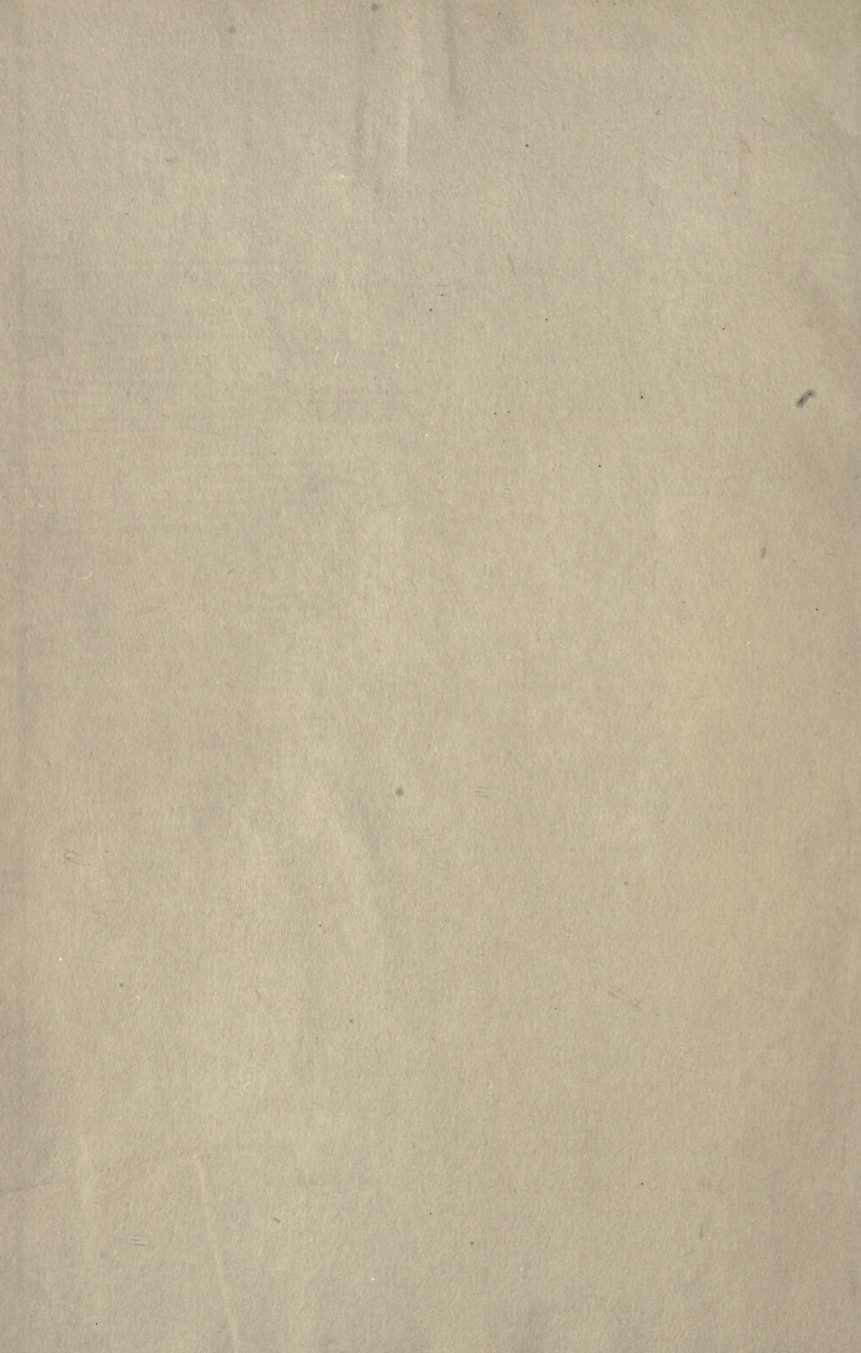
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# *Divorce*

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# D I V O R C E

BY

CHARLES WILLIAMS

HUMPHREY MILFORD

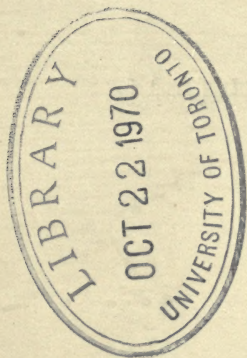
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TO MY FATHER  
AND MY OTHER TEACHERS

Certain of these poems have appeared in the *New Witness*, and two in *A Miscellany of Contemporary Poetry*, 1919.



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## *Divorce*

(TO MY FATHER)

WHEN Love, born first of thought and will,  
Ponders what dooms it shall fulfil,  
And knows itself and names,  
Sole son of man to meet and dare  
All lusts couched in the body's lair  
Till he their fury tames :

From whom his duty shall he learn,  
To whom for admonition turn,  
That his young heart may know  
What infinite fatality  
Life shall wreak on him, nor shall he  
Refuse to undergo ?

Whom but such souls as, torn with pain,  
Have proved all things and proved them vain  
And have no joy thereof,  
Yet lifting their pale heads august  
Declare the frame of things is just,  
Nor shall the balance move ?

Each to his teachers,—nor of mine,  
Though long and lofty be the line,  
Shall any, sir, be set  
More high in this poor heart than you  
Who taught me all the good I knew  
Ere Love and I were met :

## Divorce

Great good and small,—the terms of fate,  
The nature of the gods, the strait  
Path of the climbing mind,  
The freedom of the commonwealth,  
The laws of soul's and body's health,  
The commerce of mankind.

The charges launched on Christendom  
You showed me, ere the years had come  
When I endured the strain,  
Yet warned me, unfair tales to balk,  
What slanders still the pious talk  
Of Voltaire and Tom Paine.

What early verse of mine you chid,  
Rebuked the use of *doth* and *did*,  
Measuring the rhythm's beat ;  
Or read with me how Caesar passed,  
On the March Ides, to hold his last  
Senate at Pompey's feet !

What words of grace, not understood  
Until the years had proved them good,  
Your wisdom set in me,—  
Until the asps of blindness lay  
Upon your brows and sucked away  
Joy, sweetness, memory.

Now all the pages of the wise,  
Whereon for happiness your eyes  
Were wisely apt to pore,  
Upon another's mouth depend,  
And friend by step is known from friend,  
And faces seen no more.



## *Divorce*

Now, now the work all men must do  
Is mightily begun in you ;

And the sure-cutting days  
Leave you, disfurnished, dispossessed  
Of earth, to seek your spirit's rest  
Beyond our mortal ways.

Now, now in you the great divorce  
Begins, whose everlasting source  
Sprang up before the sun,  
Whose chill dividing waters roll  
'Twixt flesh and spirit, mind and soul,—  
Than death more deeply run :

Divorce, sole healer of divorce ;  
For our deep sickness of remorse  
Sole draught medicinal,  
Which Grief from bitter herbage brews  
Where Babylonish waters ooze  
O'er Mansoul's shattered wall ;

Divorce, who cries all mortal banns ;  
Chief foreman of the artisans  
Who quarry from Time's pit  
New stuff for souls, hewn stone on stone ;  
Piercer of hearts, by whom is shown  
Death in death implicit ;

Divorce, itself for God and Lord  
By the profounder creeds adored :  
Who in eternity,  
A bright proceeding ardour, parts  
The filial and paternal hearts,  
And knits the riven Three.

## *Divorce*

O if in holier hours I meet  
Your happier head in Sarras' street,  
    When our blind years are done,  
What song remains shall run to pay  
Its duty, sir, from me that day,  
    Your pupil and your son.



## *In Time of War*

### I. PRAISE OF DEATH

ON this side sit the old men  
Amid their policies,  
On that side play the children  
With young unknowing eyes ;  
Betwixt, encompassed with our fears,  
Ascend the dedicated years.

The heads of all male children  
Were marked since Seventy-Five  
As the Egyptian first-born,  
Who, joyously alive,  
Knew not how soon, how sure, how grim  
The night of death awaited him.

Now, silent 'mid our keening,  
Now, cold and dumb as he,  
They lie ; while through the darkness  
What roaring host goes free ?  
What nations wake ? what peoples cry ?  
What new device of liberty ?

O Ireland broken-hearted,  
O Poland newly-called,  
O slain through generations,  
Judah,—were ye unthralled  
When, struck with fire no rains could quell  
Those heads of admiration fell ?

## *In Time of War*

Amen : come also quickly,  
Immortal Death and young,  
Where walk we, charged with sorrow,  
Their purposes among :  
For their love's sake who brought us in,  
Death, be we counted of thy kin :

They, ere that last fulfilment  
And climax of their wars,  
Sat in their youth beside thee,  
Thy close familiars :  
Yea, with such zeal ensued thine ends,  
Servants thou call'dst them not, but friends.

But we—poor exiles—hunger  
Within our plenteous ease  
For those hid happy moments  
When he who loves thee sees  
Imminent dangers come abroad,  
And thee thyself upon his road.

So we behold thee, Master,  
On far interior hills,  
Hearing thy thin sweet music,  
The strain that saves and kills,  
Calling to solitude and fast,  
Until Possession be outcast.

How like a naked beggar,  
My prince, thou travellest !  
Who art in Wisdom's chambers  
A high convenient guest.  
At Beauty's table art thou fed,  
And O thou sleep'st in Love's own bed !

## *In Time of War*

Dull are Delight's best revels  
Until thou bidd'st rejoice ;  
And the Nine silent Muses  
Thou touchest into voice ;  
Passion—thy foster-son—hath known  
No wakening call but thine alone !

How shall we not desire thee,  
We the least sons of Earth ?  
O strip us of our garments,  
Encompass us with dearth !  
Salt is the food that Plenty brings,  
But thou hast healing in thy wings !

Come, master of salvation,  
And coming bring with thee  
Zeal, Poverty, and Wisdom,  
Confirmed Chastity,  
Joy, that is dead till thou be nigh,  
Laughter and Song and Prophecy !



## *In Time of War*

### II. LOVERS TO LOVERS

WHEN peacefully we moved amid your peace,  
What hour foresaw that we should turn ingrate,  
And, loath untouched by war to bid war cease,  
Hold you thus severed and discorporate?

Our wills, that dare not break with war's will, thus  
Are made the agents of your sole divorce :  
To you the rent, the agony ; to us  
Salvation, hardly tintured with remorse.

Yet doubt not soon, in some new wrath immersed,  
On us our Lord Love shall avenge your pain,  
When, smitten with disaster, we shall thirst  
For consolation,—and shall thirst in vain.

## *In Time of War*

### III. ON THE WAY TO SOMERSET

THROUGH the mid counties, shining with their water,  
Sharp as we swung, all labour left behind,  
Into the West land and our days of laughter,  
Wholly the great wars vanished from our mind.

Wantage arose, with her battles all of faery,  
Kings half-divine who dammed the sea-swept hordes ;  
Bath, with her ghostly walks and gardens airy,  
Bright with her duels and memory of swords.

Dim, as we gazed, grew the little churches, moulded  
But from one myth of all that mythic strain.  
—Lo, all abruptly to our sight unfolded,  
Flat lay a wheatfield, under storms of rain.

Then in our hearts we saw the farther water,  
Transports and cruisers, hospitals and mines,  
Heard the great guns,—and vanished all our laughter,—  
Where in our wars the rifles guard the lines.

## *In Time of War*

### IV. IN ABSENCE

THINK not, although no more you walk  
In English roads or with us talk,  
That we and English roads are free  
From your continual company.

For, since on that last enterprise  
Were closed your tired and bloody eyes,  
On some new expedition gone,  
Though your souls leave our souls alone ;

Yet now, those seasons to retrieve  
Which they some while were loath to leave,  
And by our sharpened sense discerned,  
Your bodies are themselves returned :

Or, being held still in their place,  
With strong desire turn backward space,  
Make England France, and draw us through  
To be environed there with you.

So we, 'neath strangers' footsteps, hear  
Your heavy marches sounding near ;  
And in your silent listening post  
Are their confused noises lost.

To walls and window-curtains cling  
Your voices at each breakfasting,  
As the cups pass from hand to hand,  
Crying for drink in No Man's Land.



## *In Time of War*

Through all the gutters of the town  
Your blood—your ghostly blood!—runs down,  
Spreads in slow pools, and stains the feet  
Of all who cross your ancient street.

On hills and heaths, where once you lay  
Reading beneath the hot noonday,  
Now if we lie, how near you keep—  
But still, but frozen, but asleep!

## *In Time of War*

### V. REUNION

PLEASANT companion Sleep, refrain  
While meditation tells  
How deep in England once again  
A cherished friendship dwells.

All waves that round this island go  
Now closely us combine,  
Since none but English rivers flow  
Between his door and mine.

Now I with him may once again  
Our ancient quest begin ;  
By speech the working of his brain  
To me may enter in.

Nor needs there speech if glance meet glance,  
On walks or at the play,  
Or anywhere I by good chance  
May meet him any day.

## *In Time of War*

### VI. FOR A PIETÀ

SORROW am I, though none has seen my tears.

To me for comfort all men's childhood ran ;  
To me men's dolour piously uprears

This image, where I mourn, not men, but man.  
I am that which lives when in your darkest hour  
Not heroes only, but their hopes, have died.

I am the desolation, and the power  
Of patience ; I await what shall betide.



## *Ballade of a Country Day*

THE burden of a day of country good :

From the young morn till afternoon grew late  
Over her bright hair May drew up the hood  
Of her dark cloud ; cities grew out of date  
To us, between whom, while we walked or sate,  
Sprang the old questions never words make stale,—  
If Love be lord of us or only Fate,  
If Sarras be, if Sarras hold the Grail.

The apple and the gorse in Chorley Wood

Bloomed ; the wide fields stretched wet and desolate ;  
And o'er them vanished the quick swallows' brood ;  
Light far off shone through the beech openings strait,  
True and translucent green,—seeming fit mate  
For the full colour of that eternal vale,  
To its mid town of Sarras consecrate,  
If Sarras be, if Sarras hold the Grail.

Gods have men known of anger and of blood,

Gods of the north, of tempest, and of hate,  
Gods of a happier earth and kindlier mood,  
But whatso God in Sarras doth estate  
Mortality in light, and there await  
Our journey's term, to hear our ventures' tale,  
Rejoices in those fields of broad debate,  
If Sarras be, if Sarras hold the Grail.

# *Ballade of a Country Day*

## ENVOY

Heroes, innumerable perils wait,

Earth and the lesser heavens have sworn our bale,

Pledge we anew to meet by Sarras' gate,

If Sarras be, if Sarras hold the Grail.

## *Ballade of Travellers*

NAMES are written on maps unrolled  
Of shires and cities, great books are lined  
With titles sounding as far bells tolled  
In hearts of romance on a veering wind ;  
Yet when the homes of those words we find  
How is their wizardry all undone !  
Hardly we say, as we walk resigned,  
Through the whole world's towns is the Free Town one.

In a seven-nights' space is a new town old,  
Seven mornings teach us the ways that wind  
To quay or market, to farm or wold,  
And lost are the ways that lie behind.  
Lucent no more are the bricks, or blind  
Are we, and with memories overrun ;  
We pine abroad as at home we pined :  
Through the whole world's towns is the Free Town one.

Ports and the deep-sea boats they hold,  
High roads where vessels of traffic grind,  
Hamlets which lanes or moors enfold,—  
None to the heart shall contentment bind :  
One city alone to men is kind,  
That is seen and seen not, and kept of none,  
Yet allwhere hath ever to earth inclined :  
Through the whole world's towns is the Free Town one.



# *Ballade of Travellers*

## ENVOY

Prince, whether we dwell in a street assigned  
Or wander under a changing sun,  
This be the token that stills our mind :  
Through the whole world's towns is the Free Town one.

## *Ghosts*

If that which earth from heaven divides  
Were softly all removed,  
And I at the next corner met  
With you whom once I loved,

No friendship 'twixt your eyes and mine  
Should suddenly revive,—  
Who, charged with heaven in all your veins,  
In a new London thrive.

Along this doubly-pavèd street  
Though you should walk with me,  
No right communion should attend  
On that epiphany.

Wiser than such estrangèd sight  
To see your shadows loom  
Along this shadowed road by night,  
Gloom visioned upon gloom :

While exhalations of the street  
And vapours of my mind  
Mingle within the past, and drift  
Upon a ghostly wind.

By such vague symbols of your truth  
Be your great spirits known,  
Till to my tread this pavement yields  
Its firmer under-stone.

## *Ghosts*

But O as now in that high town  
Your souls of courage live,  
Save me from darkness when my own  
I into judgement give.

Speak to the ministry of Fate  
Lest, when this world dissolves,  
Some vaporous and ghostly cloud  
My fleeing soul involves.

Your heavenly conversation turn  
Some while in aid of me,  
That I may now, in these dark ways,  
Glimpse of your city see ;

And, though our parted loves no more  
Shall grace with grace requite,  
These sacramental roads may be  
With your true presence bright.

## *To Michal: After a Vigil*

LAST night I slept not  
Close in your bed,  
Nor could I cherish  
There your dark head :  
O, was I found in your dream ?

Dreams, none can rule them ;  
I, more content,  
Sought you and found you  
Where I was bent :  
O, was an ending to dream !

That body's beauty,  
Where your dreams coast,  
Knew I and neared I,  
Hid in the Host,—  
O, else was beauty but dream !—

In the transparent  
Small fragile cake  
Wherethrough our Lord Love  
Almost doth break :  
O, else was body but dream !

There, to true matter  
Eyes half-unlatched,  
Through the night-season  
For you I watched :  
O, then I knew what was dream !



## *To Michal: After a Vigil*

Here to my vision  
Move you, cloud-swirled  
By all the mist blown  
Through the dim world :  
O, is it vision or dream ?

In the True Body,  
Lo, your true face  
Looked to behold me,  
There, beyond space :  
O, was an ending to dream !

There, where all perfect  
Matter is stored,  
In our true bodies  
Met we, Adored !  
O, but we sink now to dream

# *House-hunting*

## I

IN the high town which is eternity,  
The plotted comprehension of all souls,  
Through which the all-tributaried river rolls  
Waters of peace, and spreads communicably  
In wells, canals, fountains, and middle sea ;  
Where Love, in commerce 'twixt his settled poles,  
God and the people, mightily controls  
And is controlled by spirits just and free :

There have all towns and times of towns their place,  
Being modes of our interior city, fit,  
Each at its special knot of Time and Space,  
For some immortal to eternize it,  
Meet for some soul to find by heavenly wit  
And to inhabit in that town of grace.

## II

IN that eternal town what shall we find,  
What house of the whole world, modern or antique,  
Best after our lives' pattern? shall we seek  
Broad-knowledged neighbourhoods with our own kind,—  
Felt here by men as the Athenian mind?  
Or the Carthusians' solitary, bleak,  
And Gothic height? or, found for that too weak,  
Some quiet street, here in Dutch towns divined?  
Or shall our joyous spirits cross some bridge  
Of tenderness into past passion, set  
For ever in that true world, and regain  
The county where our lives were truest, lane  
Of Hertfordshire, cottage of Somerset,  
Or—more familiar—Hampstead's road and ridge?

## *House-hunting*

### III

HAPPY that town ! happy its citizens !  
Most happy we if we inhabit, Fair,  
On any windy height or sunny square,  
In God's immediate presence or true men's :  
But also that full stream through swamps and fens  
Labours and twists its way ; O what if there  
We by the force of our past wills repair  
To feverish hovels or infectious dens ?  
O if, diseased by the world's lust and blind  
To those great walks and avenues, we come  
Into the huts and tenements man's mind  
Here by Zambesi builds or Thames,—the sum  
And dwelling of our foul lives and unkind,  
In the last haunts of Pandemonium !

### IV

OR you with Love being mightily content,  
The sickness done which your light present sin  
Shall at that change bring on till, pale and thin,  
You are renewed with heavenly nourishment,—  
That hot and scarfing malady quite spent,  
Shall you, some household of his choice within,  
With him new travel and new toil begin,  
Nor glance at dogs on their own mischief bent ?  
Nor know that I, so hidden from your eyes,  
Still, to my own, am prisoned by that place  
Where once I, loosing all my lust, my power  
To stamp eternity upon an hour,  
Chose my full lot,—nor there shall recognize  
Your fragrant head, your glad eternal face ?

## *Celestial Cities*

I saw no temple therein.

WHEN our translated cities  
Are joyous and divine,  
And through the streets of London  
The streets of Sarras shine,  
When what is hid in London  
Doth then in Sarras show,  
And we in that new township  
The ancient highways know,  
Though the bricks sing together  
In those celestial walls,  
Shall we not long, o'er Ludgate,  
To see the dome of Paul's?

When we shall hear—how gladly!—  
The general shout declare  
That up Cheapside his pageant  
Conveys the young Lord Mayor,  
When all applause salutes him,  
Man chosen among men,  
By proof of former friendship  
Known to each citizen,  
Though in his streets of freedom  
Our happy souls confer,  
Shall we not miss the towers,  
The gates, of Westminster?

There shall our little churches  
To open squares be turned,  
And daylight shine for ever  
Where once the candles burned :



## *Celestial Cities*

But ah, by Thames the Temple  
    Untempled there shall be;  
No more shall rise by London Bridge  
    Saint Mary Overy;  
Saint Martin's-in-the-Fields shall pass,  
    Saint Clement Danes come down,  
And silent be the bells of dawn  
    From Kew to Kentish Town !

Shall we not muse a little  
    On how we talked afar  
Of Roman and Byzantine  
    And Perpendicular ?  
When the world's dreams and visions  
    Immanuel fulfils,  
How bare shall lie before us  
    These abbeyed vales and hills !  
When we shall look from Sarras  
    Across her pleasant shire,  
And see a thousand hamlets  
    But not a single spire !

## *Ballad of Material Things*

THE devil walked by Hell Gate, that opens upon earth,  
And saw a cloud of conflict around the house of birth,  
And highly mourned Beelzebub, that holy place within  
To see so much of courtesy and such a lack of sin.

For three gates give on Mansoul, by two the spirits come,  
Tribunes of Sarras, tyrants of Pandemonium ;  
But by the other portal, too narrow for such wings,  
The unborn souls of manhood come to material things.

Then answered the prince Moloch : ' There lacks not, O our  
lord,  
Battle and skill for battle in stratagem and sword,  
And companies of valour and generals therefor ;  
And all Mansoul is riotous with noise of civil war.

' And often are men traitors, but yet for all our pains  
The oldest of their buildings untaken yet remains :  
By Sarras' portal Michael is fighting desperately,  
But O to win the third gate, the lowest of the three !

' For there the lanes and alleys all thick and twisted lie,  
So close the house roofs lean across we cannot see the sky,  
And there, when all the rest is lost, still flies the flag of  
earth,  
And there man's strength renews itself, by that low gate of  
birth.

' If thou wilt rise and take it, O star of victory,  
No refuge from our conquest in all mankind shall be ;  
The Burning Heart of Dante before our shafts shall fail,  
The Daffodils of Wordsworth shall be of no avail.'

## *Ballad of Material Things*

Then mightily the devil rose to seize the gate of earth,  
Around it through the city he set his lines of dearth,  
And all about the universe began to run and peer  
To force that gate by violence and break its bolts by fear.

On baffled wings of anger, if he might enter in  
This gatehouse of man's body and turn it into sin,  
He sought as high as Lucifer, but higher still those towers  
Were hidden in the night of God and armed with maiden  
powers.

With closed wings downward sank he through fundamental  
seas

To find its lowest stonework amid primaeval trees,  
But still the waves beat on it and in the lowest night  
Its walls impenetrable stood and armed with maiden might.

Then back he turned to Mansoul and passed to join the  
strife,

And underneath his charges fainted the breath of life ;  
Until before its battlements his trumpet call was blown,  
And thrice he dashed against it and thrice was overthrown.

'O what art thou to foil me,' the devil cried to it,  
'When I have seized man's spirit and poisoned all his wit,  
And hope is trampled under me and charity is dead ?'  
And lightly all the gatehouse replied to him and said :

'Though thou shalt take the city, Beelzebub my foe,  
Belfry and cellar bloodily, yet, me to overthrow,  
Needs must thou set some ambush to gain the way of flesh,  
Thy disincarnate powers in manhood to immesh.

'Go, find some maid to love thee, the portal that sufficed  
For entrance to my warder shall serve for Antichrist ;

## *Ballad of Material Things*

Softly shalt thou be born in her, and when the months are  
run

Thou shalt be one with matter as he my lord is one.

‘But now the law within me outstands your petards wild ;  
I that am burnt and blackened shall never be defiled,  
Whose bulwarks out to earthward are firm on Godhead  
stayed,

Whose arch to heaven is rounded in the secrets of a maid.’

Then surging from those portals the mind of Wordsworth  
drew

Immortal strength from woods and hills, and undefeated  
flew

The Burning Heart of Dante, and all of matter strove  
To aid the arms of Mansoul in nature and in love.



## *Dialogue between the Republic and the Apostasy*

### *The Voice of the Republic*

To all the nations, provinces, and towns,  
Hamlets and huts,—to all Earth's populace,  
Serfdoms or synods, parliaments or crowns,  
Be greeting and be grace.

None hath beheld me, yet hath never man  
Shaped with his peers a wall of government  
But I was that diviner artisan  
Who spake with his intent.

All civic hungers have in me their scope  
Who of all cities am the purposed Name ;  
I in men's changing hopes am that one hope  
Which hath myself for aim.

Of my own will I bind myself in walls,  
Sink in foundations and in towers grow high,  
Of my own will I stand, and no stone falls,  
There is no town but I.

### *The Voice of the Apostasy*

Hast thou forgot, O City overproud,  
Me, than all things save thee more ancient? I,  
Who to my will thy strength have ever bowed,  
Deny thee and defy.

## *Dialogue between the Republic*

Oft as thou hurlest into act anew,  
Art within time law and a liberty,  
I twist, I break, I perjure, I undo,  
Thou fall'st to tyranny.

Thou hast not, O fair town republican,  
Shaped thyself ever in the bounds of space,  
But there hath grown a traitor to that plan,  
A foe against that place.

I of thy fountains drink, I walk in thee,  
One stone thou lay'st and with the next I rise,—  
I, Pandemonium, breaking up thy free  
Town with my leaguered spies.

### *The Voice of the Republic*

Thy warfare O mine enemy, I know  
In men and towns upon their end in me,  
To love and equal brotherhood a foe,  
A foe to liberty.

Yet, howsoe'er keen, thy created eyes  
Flag in the vistas of the infinite,  
None but myself can know my enterprise  
In the clear whole of it.

No spade hath digged, trowel nor mortar joins  
My bricks, nor measures my walls' period ;  
For, as a son born of his father's loins,  
Perfect I spring from God.

Thou seest me not, thou hear'st my voice afar ;  
City on city against me thou break'st down ;  
While, quicker than thy diligence can mar,  
I rise in town on town.

## *and the Apostasy*

I, to the utmost height of making, God,  
Yet in the depth of all the made am man,  
Heaven beyond heaven, clod in crumbling clod,  
Crowned yet republican.

### *The Voice of the Apostasy*

Count up thy ruins through a million years,  
Since Chanoch, man's blood first by man being shed,  
Arose, of hatred edified and fears,  
And based upon the dead.

Through all lost ages count thy embers quenched,  
Since men, enlarged into blood-brotherhood,  
Yet in their family were split and trenched  
Round greater needs than food.

Since all thy past with broken towns is strewn,  
What final city hop'st thou yet to build?  
What site shall serve for it? what stone unhewn?  
What architect? what guild?

### *The Voice of the Republic*

What canst thou know of death, even death, my foe?  
Before time was or any towns began,  
Utter destruction did I undergo  
Ere I was safe for man.

Then God in earthquake tore me, all the hills  
Where I Jerusalem am founded shook,  
My river ceased, and from my water-mills  
No flour that day he took:

My bulwarks crashed, my palaces were rent,  
And my foundations opened to the air,  
Dragons and thieves through all my body went,—  
Wert thou not also there?

## *Dialogue between the Republic*

Or art thou deaf to rumours which o'errun  
The earliest pales man round his altars built,  
Of skies made black, divinities undone,  
And of a god's blood spilt ?  
From such annihilation I arose,  
My breaches shut, my highways re-illumed ;  
And on eternal conquest I repose,  
To surety re-assumed.

### *The Voice of the Apostasy*

City of boasts ! Yet if thou art indeed  
Aught more than dream, sprung within man's sick mind  
Brooding upon the infinite, hear me plead,  
Blind, for my brethren blind.  
Lo here the poor, the sacrificed, the maimed :  
All is within thine ending ; end it thou !  
If thou eternally art Justice named,  
Content them ! fashion now  
Some swift and sudden miracle to bring  
Peace to thy poor : why wilt thou have them die ?  
Thy law and men's laws work their suffering,—  
Redeem, heal, satisfy !  
How canst thou watch thy folk to such death come,  
Couched in a bitter world, on rough rocks fed,—  
Hopelessness, hunger, battle, martyrdom ?  
Turn thou their stones to bread !

### *The Voice of the Republic*

Well, O Apostasy, it fits thy mood  
Such satisfaction for my folk to win,  
Who so by pretext of immediate good  
Still temptest man to sin.



## *and the Apostasy*

Men slay? I bear; are slain? yet I endure.

No easy justice bring I nor quick peace;  
Misers and conquerors torment my poor,  
I make them not to cease.

For since some huge gorilla mumbled 'I',  
And back the whole creation thundered 'thou',  
The freedom of my sons I ratify,  
Nor their choice disallow.

No spirit's littlest deed but must long while  
Work on, must infinitely breed in me,  
Who only can atone and reconcile  
In my eternity.

### *The Voice of the Apostasy*

Therefore if these thy folk shall be downtrod  
Till to thy weakness the strong heart be slave,  
The miserly grow liberal as God,  
Long shalt thou take to save!

O but for shame's sake shorten thou the time!  
Convert the rich since thou wilt feed no poor!  
Turn the proud hopes which think through power to climb  
To some imperial floor.

Earth's wounded loves beneath them fall and bleed,  
Only since Love himself will never show;  
If thou art Love, be seen! thereon indeed  
Shall all things loveward flow.

No more thy foes shall mock thy advent then,  
Nor thy true sons at thy slow date repine;  
If thou art the Jerusalem of men,  
Fair City, rise and shine!

## *Dialogue between the Republic*

Show but thyself, thou need'st not to command !

Then shall all living know and spring to thee,  
Then will I give all things into thy hand,  
I and my friends with me.

### *The Voice of the Republic*

If all the kingdoms of the world were mine,  
Doubtless their emperor the kings should know,  
Before me, their souls' Suleiman, incline  
Abased : I choose not so.

I, a fair town, free and republican,  
Graced by my citizens electively,  
Who to all men am native, being man,  
Am equal, being free,—

I as an equal amid equals move ;  
Am to each heart but one 'mid many a choice,  
Nor with persuasion beyond any love  
Entreat him for his voice.

Chooses he? I at ending shine, a God.  
Refuses? But a dream I pass away.  
Accepts? The heavens shall be his native sod.  
Rejects? He treads but clay.

O as too soon I move not to my end,  
So never with magniloquence I woo,  
I, Love, who only can a man befriend  
If he be glad thereto.

### *The Voice of the Apostasy*

Have then thy choice ! no need is mine to shrink  
From the aeonian strife thy will prepares,  
Which man endures, caught on that battle's brink,  
And miserably shares.

## *and the Apostasy*

Now busy over hearth and aqueduct,  
Now lost in bloody quarrels o'er his plan,  
Now bold to build, now of all boldness sucked,  
Behold thy creature, man.

Still false, still changing his immediate past,  
And constant only to apostasy,  
This is the mind, O City, where thou hast  
Thy sole reality.

But—his endeavours broken—by and by  
He to the slime wherein his race began  
Shall slip again, and perish ; man shall die,  
And thou shalt die with man.

### *The Voice of the Republic*

Well hast thou marked man's bloody star, my foe,  
Mocked his defeats, twisted his victories !  
Only one thing nor he nor thou canst know,—  
How swiftly I increase !

Each perfidy is fuel to my fire  
Of wrath, each loyalty my mercy feeds ;  
That double passion drew him from the mire  
And to salvation speeds.

Each truth, each untruth, waking deep in me,  
Quickens my spirit ; almost is time spanned :  
Feel'st thou not, feel'st not, O mine enemy,  
My hour, my hour at hand ?

Mercy and wrath within man's holiest mind  
Are piled and imminent ; thou, quite outcast,  
Incapable of me, shalt only find  
No cities more to blast.

## *The Republic and the Apostasy*

That hour will I fulfil man's liberties,  
His imperfections with perfection close,—  
An hour which, save my chosen, none foresees,  
Nor, save my Father, knows ;

When this opaque world shall by me be lit,  
And I be manifest,—not to destroy,  
Not to destroy, but to transfigure it  
With uncreated joy.

Then visibly shall I be bound in walls,  
Sink in foundations and in towers grow high,  
Then shall I stand and shine while no stone falls,  
There shall be naught but I.

## *At the Gates*

BECAUSE no man has slandered me  
Or wrought me evil, with what plea

Shall I approach to enter in,  
Where they who suffered under sin

And their oppressors have forgiven,  
Make a sweet concord thorough heaven?

I who have spent my time at ease,  
Untouched of man's injustices,

Shall find then how my comfort lets  
That I should say *Forgive my debts*

*As I forgive all owed to me.*

Ah, fair souls, purged by love, can ye

Endure that I too should belong—  
I who have wrought, not suffered, wrong,—

To your companionship? for there  
'Tis your forgiveness makes you fair.

O let me pass, though I shall walk  
Least in your city, and your talk

Shall never join, who only live  
To take your pardon, not to give.

But what if I have injured one  
Whose way so far from yours hath run



## *At the Gates*

That he eternally puts on  
Mysterious disunion

From God, your chosen? Him no praye  
For pardon from me waiting there

Shall reach or pierce, and how shall I  
Enter, while his avenging cry

Against my past and me shall come  
Inward from Pandemonium?

Ah, lord Love, grant my sins may be  
Wrought all against thy saints and thee!

## *On the German Emperor*

PARDON, you ruined bodies of our war,  
That we less wrath than consolation find  
In thinking upon that dire emperor,  
Who loosed all mankind's pride upon mankind  
For since he bears our sins and we bear his,—  
So dread the cousinship of flesh and bone,—  
This bloody spectacle none other is  
Than Love in us betrayed and quite undone.  
O dark design of comfort!—Him, we know,  
Love turns to meet and in quick arms to fold;  
We too, 'tis seen then, may be greeted so,  
Us too Love's pardon may be swift to hold,—  
Pardon we dared not trust till lo, it showers  
Upon this deed, which is but like to ours.

## *To Michal: On Forgiveness*

WHEN fault of madness or of sloth  
Has wrecked our often plighted troth,  
And all your angers, justly moved,  
Lighten upon this earth you loved,  
How soon they sleep ! how swiftly new,  
Ere yet my trouble turns to you,  
Your tenderness prepares my rest  
Upon your all-forgiving breast !

More proudly, for some evil chance  
Of harmful-harmless ignorance,  
Or some pure foolishness of thought  
Wherein my good intent is caught,  
You, pricked with the unmeant offence,  
Demand a courteous penitence,  
Before those eyes, wherein I live,  
Caution, admonish, and forgive.

But how your beauty knows to shine  
In pomp, how consciously divine  
At times you let your pardons fall  
Where has been found no fault at all ;  
And your tyrannical desire  
Contrite repentance doth require  
From love, which willingly hath striven,—  
Only to have itself forgiven.

## *Politics*

ONE, indivisible, and free,  
Notes of the only True !—  
O Christian creed of deity  
She wholly does indue !  
O high republican decree,  
Refusing prince and shah !  
One, indivisible, and free,  
The triple formula !

Bourbon and Brunswick, Valmy done,  
Heard a great silence tell  
The first free nation risen, one  
And indivisible :  
One God the doctors of the schools,  
With Rabbi and Imam,  
Teach to my heart one mistress rules  
In a transfigured calm.

But ah, what war that land betides  
Who does her clerks and hinds  
Neglect, while tyranny divides  
Her many million minds ;  
Nor in such blessèd union moves  
As in her passion she ;  
As in their quick creation Love's  
Complicit Trinity.

## *Politics*

Happy the people who, once freed,  
Equal and plighted all,  
Afford to each interior need  
And each exterior call  
Such quick access as prayer controls  
To God, such quick reply  
As to one soul from one sweet soul's  
Perpetual charity.

Alas how long ere, sorrow-wise,  
The heart of England feel  
And in her politic devise  
That sacred commonweal,—  
One, indivisible, and free,  
Notes of the only True,  
Taught, Fair, to all in deity,  
And taught to me in you !



## *First Love*

WILT thou regret I never wooed  
As hastier lovers will,—  
Who, too incredulous of mood,  
Attended for thee still?

Deeply my half-reluctant sense  
Doubted its own delight,  
Till, closing all that high suspense,  
I dared believe in sight!

But if I long considered, Fair,  
How love at all could be,  
Much more will I reject despair  
And keep this faith in thee.

I will of doubt make such an art  
That no dismay shall move  
Sufficient bitterness of heart  
For unbelief in love;

And still of death incredulous  
Till death, outworn, shall die,  
My curious mind shall enter thus  
Into eternity.

## *Love is Lost*

LOVE is lost and gone astray :

O for pity !

He has found a moonlit way

From the city.

Where shall we seek him? O say, O say !

We have searched through every lane

Where the lovers

Walk in twilight: but our pain

Ne'er discovers

That god, that glory, yet are we fain !

Have ye climbed unto the meads

Where her races

Cynthia, ever vestal, leads ?

Marked his traces

Far from the highway, through grass and reeds ?

Know ye not how tales aver

His famed mother

Venus was his kidnapper ?

And another

(O vestal Cynthia !) despoiled by her ?

In Venus' town he beaten was

For his longing ;

Wherefore he escapèd has

From that wronging.

Ye shall behold him, where the maids pass.

## *Love is Lost*

Watch, till Cynthia go by !

Ye shall find him :

But in her chaste company

Naught shall bind him.

Call him, beseech him, but go not nigh !

## *Incidents*

FLOWER-DECKED table set for tea,  
    Cake and bread-and-butter,  
All the casual courtesy  
    That her sweet lips utter,  
O the flames, the little flames !  
O the strong fire burning !

Candles in the candlesticks  
    Bright on cup and platter,  
Gossip and deep talk that mix  
    In an evening's chatter,  
O the pools, the little pools !  
O the full flood running !

Service to our daily lot  
    With what gayness tendered,  
Deeds and words and glances shot  
    With her love once rendered,  
O her acts, her little acts !  
O her brooding passion !

## *Return*

HEART, why labourest thou ?

I pant

With the pressure of my want.

Was not unto thee, alone

Last night lying, thy need shown ?

O not till to her I go.

Why then dost thou move so slow,

Heart ? why labourest thou ?

Alas,

What could bring me to this pass

But to feel how near now she

Sighs : O love, I wait for thee ?

Why art thou distressed ?

O peace !

I am faint with the increase

Of her neighbourhood, I die

If she help not speedily.



## *Her dark Eyes sparkle*

HER dark eyes sparkle,  
Whate'er our way,  
On all about her  
The times display,  
On grate or window  
Or passer-by,  
So quick and gaily  
And watchfully :

While mine are brooding  
Upon that show,  
Heavily lying  
And moving slow ;  
They gain no tincture  
(Ashamed and dull)  
From all earth's beauties  
Most worshipful.

Sweet eyes, remember  
This slothful pair,  
Teaching them duty  
Everywhere  
To sight and knowledge  
Of things and men,  
But when they meet you  
O hold them then.

## *Four Sonnets*

### I

WHEN, playing through the world, my song puts claim  
To station with Love's peers and guild-masters,  
And they perchance make question of thy name,  
Saying: 'What she is this thy voice prefers?'  
To them my song: 'Ah, when my master goes  
In twilight, careless of the elvish ring,  
Or gnomie dance, or faery, and bestows  
Trouble in sighs, more deep than rhyme can sing,—  
O when his voice, though fain it be to find  
A breath more insubstantial than the air,  
An auditor more secret than the wind,  
Yearns yet to cry, lest no more it can bear,—  
Though earth be still as night in Eden were,  
He cannot speak,—her name's too close to her!'

### II

ALL toilful words, all tale of arduous hours  
Can nowise sum the greatness of the care  
Which hath safe-compassed, by laborious powers,  
Me, such love's son and quite desertless heir.  
All service that my years profess they bring  
Through tenderness of that familiar grace,  
And what hast thou to set against this thing  
Save the imperious mandate of thy face?  
Guilty receiver of that stolen sweet,  
The store of love I from my mother drew  
Throughout my nonage—O unmeant deceit!—  
To what an end nor she nor I then knew,  
How canst thou with such unperturbèd heart  
Meet her, who of that sweet had all the smart

## *Four Sonnets*

### III

HALF nun thou seem'st and half a bacchanal,  
Devout, yet ruddied in the dancing whirl :  
O from what cloister or what carnival  
Grew'st thou for me incarnate and a girl ?  
And still in obscure shadows of thine eyes  
A crouching fierceness threatens the path of man  
I feel through all my limbs the savage rise,  
Grappling with thee in strife barbarian.  
And little there should daily courtesy  
Make truce, or reason put an end to hate,  
Except thy grave look push the farther plea :  
'We were converted unto love of late.'  
Thy silver trumpets through me lead thy van ;  
But O beneath, hark the wild pipes of Pan !

### IV

O to what laws in kisses we assent  
When our rejoicing wills in them accord !  
Severity our fathers underwent  
Blooms here in beauty for a late reward.  
Set man's deeds by, and only think with me  
What throngs those natural influences slew  
Which here put on a fair hypocrisy  
And hide their past of massacre in you.  
The stuff whereof these lovely limbs are wrought  
Was lava once, a bursting tidal wave,  
Or berries with untested poison fraught,  
Or desert sand,—but every way a grave.  
Thus I in you deliberately embrace  
Nature, and all her warfare on our race.

## *After Marriage*

### I

WHY, Fairest, in such deep delay  
Was thy chief fairness hid away?  
Ah, sweet procrastinator, thou  
Hast kept the good wine until now!

Graces, I see, thou well couldst spare,  
Concealed the central grace they bare;  
The play begun, thy courtship moods  
At loveliest were but gay preludes.

Then show'dst thou, a fair land to hold  
And strewn with love's alluvial gold;  
But, now thy deeper veins are mined,  
To uses of exchange assigned,

With some alloy of duty in 't  
Love issues daily from thy mint;  
While to our new-built barns and stores  
Grain from rich fields of beauty pours.

Yet though our hearts each other till,  
Such increase is mere miracle,  
So much of harvest-tide our Sun  
Condensed into few days or none.

## *After Marriage*

For when, bewildered and in tears,  
We waited the ensuing years,  
Clinging in terror to the past,  
God's Mother saw us there aghast ;

And with a word did Him prepare  
To fill the waterpots ; cast, Fair,  
That song about him also—'Thou  
Hast kept the good wine until now !'

### II

No watcher saw when first you moved  
O'er my dispersèd heart, beloved,  
Nor in that unrulèd chaos' storm  
Beheld your image taking form.

Long hid within me did I hold  
The gospel your bright forehead told,  
And secret to my proper want  
Preserved your eyes' new covenant.

But now, since, opened and exposed,  
Those vows profound in marriage closed,  
And all my public life is shown  
Yours utterly and yours alone :

Why have you yielded your control  
Upon that most interior soul,  
Which now, as ere you first drew near,  
Is shaken with excess of fear ?



## *After Marriage*

Your spirit, with your beauty edged,  
To final government alleged  
My heart's surrender late to be :—  
Whence issues this new destiny ?

What advent of what farther law  
Bids you, my Fair, from me withdraw  
From me, dispersed in ancient pain  
And into chaos plunged again ?

## *Loving and Loved*

LOVING and loved, myself last night I laid  
    To rest in peace,  
Nor knew that very night how destiny  
    Should come to me,  
And I should rise up outlawed and afraid,  
    And quiet cease.

In dream my love and I walked in a wood,  
    Misty but fair ;  
And by us suddenly ran a great crowd,  
    In terror loud,  
By some fierce creature of the wild pursued,  
    Lion or bear.

In dream I left my love and feared and fled ;  
    And all the folk  
Faded ; alone I ran with panting breath ;—  
    Left her to death  
And ran, but after me the fierce thing sped,—  
    And I awoke.

I woke, but all the terror surged anew  
    Within my heart,  
In premonition of an hour to be  
    When I shall flee  
From her most need, fail from her when a crew  
    Of dangers start.

## *To Michal : On Brushing her Hair*

BENEATH the brushes, from that low pale brow  
The lustrous dark hair falls aside to show  
A face which some pre-Raphaelite should have loved  
And magnified when sighing passion moved  
In his coiled quatrains of luxurious verse,  
Or where his patterns, glint on glint, rehearse  
'T heir turned refrain : what other poets praised  
So well such cheeks and perfect eyelids, raised  
From such deep eyes of glamour ?

As they close,

Beneath the soothing and swift passages,  
A sudden transmutation quite undoes  
That verse : divine Victoria is dead ;  
In that short lip are tracked new poesies,  
New rhythms along that small preposterous head

## *Experiments*

### I. TRAFFIC

THESE shapes of brown and black painted horses,  
These bright dabs on the street  
Like motor-buses,—  
If I stood in front of them, would they crush me?  
Surely not : I should find  
They were cut out of paper, cardboard, or tinted metal,  
They and their riders and all the hats and parasols on them,  
Thin, almost two-dimensioned,  
And would either lean up against me or bounce over me —  
Bounce, I think.

## *Experiments*

### II. ANARCHY

How dull it is  
Always to do just the same thing with words,  
Always to fashion them into ordered sentences,  
After thought  
Of their sounds, associations, purposes, et cetera,  
Because they mean something,  
And these meanings must explode together into others,  
Spreading meaning, always meaning,  
Over the unfortunate earth.

(Not only poets,  
But all of us do it every day, miserable talkers !)

If one only could pile words up in a heap,  
Or make carpets of them,  
Or dig holes in the longer ones,  
Or put them in a farmyard to grub about with the pigs !  
But no, they must mean something,  
And alas,  
How little worth while it is to mean anything,  
And how useless to try !

Also (O how desirable !)  
If one could only destroy some words altogether,

## *Experiments*

Them

And their substantival, adjectival, adverbial, and compound  
derivatives

To infinity ;

Living happily ever afterwards

In a world free from such words as *whisky* or *snigger*.



## *Experiments*

### III. IMPOSSIBILITY

I WAS walking past  
The Tube train carriage, when it began to move ;  
And before I knew what I wanted  
It had slipped away from me.

So now I can never catch up the other end of it,  
And never till then  
Had I known what an impossibility was.

To see it disappearing,  
And my purpose for ever frustrated,  
Was almost more than I could bear,  
For I had supposed  
I should pass it before it began to move.

But that one carriage is purified  
From my rivalry for ever, undefiled by my parallel walk,  
Clean.

*On Walt Whitman's 'Song  
of Myself'*

LOUD, loud he calls, loud tells us how he calls  
Thieves, harlots, poets, packmen, millionaires ;  
How he is brother to them all, and fares  
Exultantly through earth, cheerily bawls  
An inventory of humankind : he falls  
With the weak (he cries), and climbs celestial stairs  
With saints ; to storms and soft spring winds he bares  
A head no fear or inexperience shawls.

As greatly one long since in England loved  
His fellows ; with as deep fraternity  
Fathomed their hearts, until he seemed to bring  
A world into the world : but himself moved  
Silently then, and now as shadowy  
As Ossian, or some tumulus-memored king.

## *Briseis*

THE footfalls of the parting Myrmidons  
And countercries of leaguer and of town  
Are hushed behind her as the silks drop down ;  
Alone she stands and wonderingly cons  
Heads circleted with gold or helmed with bronze ;  
Higher her eyes, from crown to loftier crown,  
Creep, till they fall, nigh blasted, at the frown  
Of Argos,—throned in his pavilions,  
And mid his captains wrathfully aware  
How the plague smites the host, how by the sea  
Beyond the ships, with vengeful prayer and oath,  
Rages the young Achilles ; of whose wrath,  
Innocent, ignorant, a captive, she  
Sees but the dropped staff on the voided chair.

## *Helen in the Chamber of Deiphobus*

BLACK is the night and moonless is the sky ;  
    No star above pierces the heaven's dark ;  
    Below, no camp-fires, braziers on no bark  
The sleepy Trojan sentinels espy :  
Within, where Priam's youngest son laid by  
    His armour, seems the long war's final spark  
    To flicker and expire.   Helen, to hark  
What footstep, through the casement heard, draws nigh,  
Leans, sword on helm and helm on greaves close wrapped  
    From glint or clangour in her cloak of wool,  
By prone Deiphobus, on whom entrapped  
    The central swords of battle shall burn full  
Presently, in that errand's blaze whereon  
Sinon is now with secret swiftness gone.

*To Michal meditating a new  
Costume*

THOUGH experts make to-day the dress  
That shall enclose your loveliness,  
And, marvellous in art, contrive  
To make your beauty more alive,  
They have no stuff and cannot sew  
The clothes to suit you when you go  
Among all ladies fair and dear  
To keep the May of our New Year.

Then all the world and heaven shall see  
Your pleasant gown of chastity ;  
Your hat, in that celestial weather,  
Shall have a close-trimmed phoenix' feather,  
Or, gathered from that joyous Spring,  
A rose-bud, real and undying,—  
As fashion still perchance be there  
Of love or wisdom : you shall bear  
A parasol of sweet concern  
For others, lest the Sun should burn  
Too dark your brilliant countenance,  
And dazzle your sun-borrowed glance ;  
But, since no storms are there to heed,  
Within those walks you shall not need,  
Nor lose, umbrellas any more :

## *To Michal meditating a new Costume*

You will not trouble much the store  
Of jewels, as you do not here,  
Only your finger still shall bear  
The single glowing ruby of  
Your passionate immortal love.

A comb of duty in your hair  
Shall prove your diligence and care  
To have your beauty dressed aright  
Only to give our host delight ;  
Your handkerchief of laces, which  
The world's delight in you made rich,  
You then must carry for display,  
Since upon our high feast of May  
Shall be no tears to wipe away ;  
Your gloves of smooth discretion shall  
Suit well that place magnificent,  
And on that sward your feet shall be  
Compactly shod with industry.



## *For a Cathedral Door*

SHALL I come here alone for praise and prayer,

Even to this famous house and wonderful,  
And quite forget where else I do repair?

O let none think that I am grown so dull!

O no, I have a house more marvellous,

More shining, mortared with diviner stuff,  
Which to consider is more dangerous :

Almost my love for me is church enough.

But lest even in devotion I grow proud,

Seeing I reach heaven by so pure a stair,  
Meet is it that I be in this place bowed,

Confessing each religious hath his fair.

Yet here be these lines fixed ; let none remove

This praise of Love's house from the house of Love.

*To Michal: On Disputing  
outside Church*

CHAFE not, madonna, that the foe could cheat  
This moment from thy heart outworn and slack.  
In the main battle's brunt thou didst not lack :  
Think what huge field of conquest or defeat  
This hour was closed ; if, breathless from that heat,  
Thou felt'st some little loss, some slight attack,  
Some dart launched at thy less-defended back,  
It cannot win again the spirit's seat.

There if thou fail'dst (as, sure, thou couldst not !), more  
And greater guilt comes soon, to sorrow o'er :  
But rather now all's conquered ! thou shalt feel,  
A day, a sennight hence, what tempters fled  
From those hot prayers. Thy foot there crushed his head,  
Smile if the dragon's claw here tore thy heel.

## *Invitation to Early Communion*

WAKE, majesty ! the night clouds break,  
The world becomes alive,  
The sleepy priests and servers wake  
To hear their clocks ring five :  
The motions of your mouth new-kissed  
Bestir your mind of sleep :  
Up, Fair ! last night we pledged a tryst  
To-day must see us keep.

Up ! ere the next half-hour shall pass,  
You, newly gowned and shod,  
Must with quick hands before your glass  
Prepare to meet your God,  
Who, launched in courses of his laws,—  
How fails my heart with fear !—  
Now to that assignation draws  
Inexorably near !

*Vexilla regis prodeunt,*  
The double banners move  
Before one altar to confront,—  
Twice-manifested Love !  
Your face, your soul, a double veil,  
Are closely wrapped round him  
Who now, in yon material grail,  
Is nearer, yet more dim !

## *Invitation to Early Communion*

One look, one kiss ! and then to prayer :

He bids no more delay

Who in our hearts long since, my Fair,

Himself prepared his way.

Disjoin and come, lest we be missed !

Come, holy and adored !

Day breaks, and Love is at the tryst :

Come forth to meet your Lord !

*At the 'Ye that do truly'*

Now are our prayers divided, now  
Must you go lonelily, and I :  
For penitence shall disallow  
Communion and propinquity.

Together we commandments heard,  
Paid tithes together and professed :  
Now mourns a solitary word  
Where solitary deeds transgressed.

Averted be that head of grace,  
And turned those melancholy eyes  
To weep, within a narrow place  
And shadow of iniquities.

Farewell ! we may no more be kind,  
Nor either ease the other's breath ;  
Death shall our marriage vows unbind,  
Death, and this sharp foretaste of death.

Farewell ! before this hour is done  
We shall have met or missed, my dear,  
In a remoter union,  
But now the solitudes are here.

## *On leaving Church*

THE ceremonial gestures end,  
The trancèd limbs are free,  
Fast, fast our rising hearts ascend  
From sinking Deity.  
The Greater Mysteries recede,  
Again the Lesser rise,  
And, furnished for our daily need,  
Appear the earthly skies.

Now wait the substituted doles,—  
Our ritual falling mute,—  
For this diviner food of souls,  
Itself half-substitute :  
The sacred ministers are gone,  
The royal banners furled,  
And we, our dullness putting on,  
Are left unto the world.

Yet at our table, even then,  
Of common food, what grace  
Adorns that outer world of men,  
In your possessèd face ;  
Where, watching in the Holy Ghost,  
I see our Lord fulfil  
His outer dwelling, yea, almost  
He there is visible.



## *On leaving Church*

Himself he here to us imparts,  
But there himself he shows :  
Be watchful, eyes ! be mindful, hearts !  
As the church-doors unclose.  
The noises of the world's concern  
And the high sun break through :  
I rise, I genuflect, I turn  
To breakfast, and to you !

## *Commentaries—I*

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.  
Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.  
A new heaven and a new earth.

EARTH, that is so fair to sight  
In my sweet love's red and white,  
Hath as fair a heaven within  
Which our Lord Love sitteth in.  
O how newly, at her birth,  
He created heaven and earth !

In a heaven of heavens, behind  
Her clear soul and her true mind,  
All his will is brought to be  
Perfect everlastingly.  
As within that heavenly worth,  
Lord, thy will be done in earth !

In his earth thy will be done,  
In this home of night and sun,  
Blood on journey, peopled mouth,  
Fragrance of her comely south,  
Her hot east, and angry north  
Whence a cold wind bloweth forth !

From thy mid perfection grow,  
Lord Love, if thy will be so,  
Till within her body's cells  
Palpably thy presence dwells,  
And her lovers, mazed and dumb,  
See in earth thy kingdom come !

## *Commentaries—II*

Whence is this, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

In the hill country,  
Where the streets clomb  
By church and market,  
There was my home.

There from wise teachers  
Patience I learned,—  
Waiting till truth be  
Rightly discerned.

Still to that teaching  
Weary I clave:—  
Shall not Messias  
Mightily save?

Lo, at that moment  
Love's maid was known,  
In the hill country,  
In a small town.

And to the gathered  
House of my kin  
Came she, exalted,  
Suddenly in.

## *Commentaries—II*

Then said I, 'Whence now  
Can this thing be,  
That my Lord's mother  
Cometh to me?'

But in her glory,  
Near as she trod,  
Sang she : 'My soul hath  
Magnified God.'

### *Commentaries—III*

It were good for that man if he had not been born.

*Happy*, that man shall say who goes forlorn,  
Or exiled with Iscariot and Cain,  
Into the darkness when Love comes to reign,  
*Happy were I if I had not been born.*

Shall I too say—when Love counts up his own,  
Banished for selfish and hid treachery  
Through all the long years that I share with thee,—  
*Happy were I if I had never known*

*That birth, that exaltation, that first sigh*  
*Peacefully loosed from a perplexèd heart,*  
*That hope for ever hungry now, that start*  
*Of life now exiled from eternity !*

## Commentaries—IV

Gal. iv. 1-7 : the Epistle for the Sunday after Christmas.

*Duly, the Sunday after Christmas, we  
Heard the epistle read, and suddenly  
A great voice cried within my heart : Behold,  
This is the doctrine ye have proved of old,  
And in your bodies bear the signs thereof ;  
This is the knowledge of the sons of love.*

Hear yet again : the elements of earth  
Ruled in you, yea, the heir himself had birth  
Among them—as the wise apostle saith ;  
For time and space and changing things and death  
Were over you, ye dwelled beneath their law,  
Nor any hope in any love ye saw  
To bring you help, and all delight was dumb.

But when the fullness of the time was come  
God sent his son forth, of a woman made,  
Made underneath the law which ye obeyed,  
Made under time and death and all that seemed  
Your doom for ever, and ye were redeemed  
Out of their might, out of their rule ; at once  
Love kindled, and ye knew yourselves for sons.

Children ye knew yourselves ; enough discerned  
Under those governors, from whom ye learned



## *Commentaries—IV*

Obedience, patience, equanimity ;  
Now was your birthday come and ye set free  
To meet your father Love, your brother Joy ;  
Kinship that naught shall in the end destroy,  
For time and death are servants at your nod,  
And ye are heirs,—and heirs of whom but God ?

*The epistle ended, and the hymn began  
Praising Immanuel, the child of man.*

## Commentaries—V

‘Sweet Jesus, be to me not a Judge, but a Saviour.’

FAIR Lord Love, whom in thy maid  
I have baffled and betrayed,  
*Sweet Love, unto me*  
*No judge but a saviour be.*

By the speaking of thy word  
In the house of that Adored,  
*Sweet Love, unto me*  
*No judge but a saviour be.*

By the fatal troth I swore  
That shall probe me evermore,  
*Sweet Love, unto me*  
*No judge but a saviour be.*

By the dark pains when I feel  
What deep cuts my soul must heal,  
*Sweet Love, unto me*  
*No judge but a saviour be.*

By the cooling hours of joy  
Lest that suffering destroy,  
*Sweet Love, unto me*  
*No judge but a saviour be.*

## Commentaries—V

When old Paynim habits come,  
Mastering my Christendom,

*Sweet Love, unto me  
No judge but a saviour be.*

When I seem, to her and thee,  
Utter infidelity,

*Sweet Love, unto me  
No judge but a saviour be.*

In her malice or her pride  
If she turn herself aside,

*Sweet Love, unto me  
No judge but a saviour be.*

In her sorrow or her need  
If I leave her heart to bleed,

*Sweet Love, unto me  
No judge but a saviour be.*

Through the days that dawn and die  
In a dear monotony,

*Sweet Love, unto me  
No judge but a saviour be.*

When that hour thou knowest not  
Sees the bolt of Doomsday shot,

*Sweet Love, unto me  
No judge but a saviour be.*

When, divorced from all, I see  
In myself Eternity,

*Sweet Love, unto me  
No judge but a saviour be.*

## *Commentaries—V*

Now and in all hours of death  
Hear what my abasement saith :

*Sweet Love, unto me  
No judge but a saviour be.*

## *Love's Adolescence*

STUNG by new needs, impatient of caress,  
With restless eyes, loose arms, and empty hands,  
Wroth at his foster-parents' littleness,  
Between our hearts and in our house he stands.  
To what shall he be turned? what discipline  
Of labour shall instruct this young Desire,  
Who, meant as gardener or builder in  
Our territory, seems thereof to tire?  
Some business, Fair, of abnegation! some  
Weary, extreme, and undelightful task,  
Whence with achievement panting he may come,—  
This is the life his fretful moments ask.  
To ease which petulance of comfort I  
Upon this sin or that will him employ:  
But what hast thou wherewith to occupy  
Love's powers, who moves in us no more a boy? . . .  
What, wilt thou on so long a journey trust  
His ignorant head? so mighty a design  
On him, unwise in exploration, thrust,—  
Whose absence from thee also shall be mine?  
Think not that thou canst this young Love dismiss,  
Orphaned, to find felicity, yet keep  
As heretofore such pleasure in our kiss,  
Such rest in our companionable sleep.

## *Love's Adolescence*

With all our eagerness must he be shod,  
With all devotion clad,—for long and large  
Must be his road and passion ere that God  
He find who gave him first into our charge.

Divine the hope, divine his exodus ;  
And that adventure of our all, divine !  
But he must wear our whole desire if thus  
Thou send'st him,—all thy purposes and mine.

Yet furnish him, if thou wilt have him go  
Where only he his true descent may learn :  
Farewell, my heart assents,—if need be so,  
I will not see thy face till he return.



## *Outland Travel*

O WHO would climb the Andes,  
The Alps or Himalay,  
While here at home in any street  
The kerbstone close beside his feet  
Falls far, far, far away ?

Or who would sail the ocean  
Or pierce to either pole,  
While distance, parting east and west,  
Is measured here by hands outstretcht  
To any casual goal ?

Or who would dare the tribesmen,  
The frosts or the simoom,  
While here at home in any talk  
Dark heresies of evil walk  
And souls may drop to doom ?

O who would seek adventure  
In Tibet or Peking,  
When he at home within his heart  
May on ancestral journeys start,  
And mightier quests begin ?

## *Advent*

OUR LORD the Nameless One (blessèd be he)  
Saw from his threshold in eternity  
Man from earth's towers climb among the gods,  
Breaking their thunders, splintering their rods,  
And in the lesser heaven sit in their stead.  
Then to his council of young souls he said :  
'Who shall be safe from man whom We have made  
Seeing already he without Our aid  
Forces yon thrones and heights of deity ?'—  
Even on the word there came one suddenly  
Crying : 'Ah, Master, men make war on thee :  
Lo, the young Christ, being alone at play,  
Is by audacious ambush caught away  
Into the soul of man : where, lest he dwell  
For ever, follows the prince Michael—hell  
Having from him but now their duty learned,  
And thence his weary banners scarce returned.'

Then said the Mighty One : 'Throne under throne  
Vanquished with all its cherubim may groan,  
And spirit be by spirit baffled : none  
Shall so from matter bring again Our Son.  
None but Ourselves shall join in strife with man,  
Our image : a new thing since time began  
Proceeded to this hour's accomplishment  
Within Us : sit, ye gods, and see the event.'  
He said, and hid from heaven the hallowed face,  
Whose name is called *ha-makom*, or the Place.

## *Advent*

But while he spoke, the archangel, heavenly war  
Bright in his person gathered up, dropped far  
Through air on air, upon man's spirit stayed,  
And all his vast religious earth surveyed,  
Temple and oracle, fetish and lair  
Of jungle powers ; then, seeking the strong prayer,  
The passionate fond inexorable will  
Which had pierced heaven, he moved therethrough, until  
Nine months through heresy and heathendom  
Had he passed on, and empty thence had come :—  
Dry and ascetic deserts where no sweet  
Flowers of young love grew ; storms of choking heat  
Under whose lust such buds withered and burned ;  
Sea-fogs of ignorance where he discerned  
Some few unfruitful isles of rocky law,  
Whereon wrecked sailors hardly dwelled : he saw  
Cities wherein lay prophets starved and dead  
And a great crowd of instincts cried for bread,  
Or where to docile pupils learned scribes  
Taught rote and ritual ; fierce nomadic tribes  
For whose wide herds their fathers' lore sufficed :  
But none of all these could have seized on Christ.

At last he drew, at nightfall on a day,  
Near to an Asian caravanserai,  
And lo, his nostrils as he neared its square  
Felt the expanding and benigner air  
Which blows where gods are : entering, he found  
Three companies sitting upon the ground,  
Each by its fire ; the prince through his worn frame  
Felt the mysterious effluence of the Name  
And knew his search was ended, in that khan  
Reposed the audacious victory of man.

## *Advent*

Upon the left, sweet and serene of soul,  
Sat in his yellow robe and with his bowl  
Our Lord Gautama, wandering through earth  
To teach the law and set men free from birth ;  
To whom the archangel : ' Hail, friend ! is it thou  
Hast wrought the deed whereat heaven marvels now ?  
Of all men's sons hast thou, the least defiled,  
Broken our walls and borne away the Child  
To this thy earth ? hast thou with violence  
Made God thy secret of experience ? '

To whom our lord the Buddha answered : ' Hail,  
Brother ! what know my people of this tale ?  
Or how should Sakka of the nearer crown  
And Brahma of the farther be brought down ?  
Or how should souls enlightened and set free  
From hunger clutch or conquer deity ?  
Nay, if for this through many a thousand lives  
Some uninstructed soul in good hope strives,  
What profit hath he when they all are spent ?  
Learn, from no god descends Enlightenment.  
They pass and suffer, borne upon the Wheel  
Of Being ; no content mankind shall steal  
From such communion ; peace dwells elsewhere.  
Lo, if thy Christ would learn it, it is here. '

He ceased, and half-abashed the prince passed by  
To where amid his turbaned company  
Our Lord Muhammad, girt and scimitared,  
Sat brooding by his fire and bending hard  
His eyes upon the Book ; but when he heard  
The angel's question, half in wrath he stirred,  
Answering, hot in zeal : ' What art thou then,  
That o'er the Maker sett'st the power of men ?

## *Advent*

What talk'st thou of God's Son? know'st thou that we  
Are the pledged champions of that Unity,—  
Moses, and Milton, and each messenger  
Sent into all lands? and no foot shall err  
From service to his kingdom, who controls  
The birth and dereliction of all souls,  
Alone, and their salvation; who is Fate,  
Immutable yet all-compassionate?'

So spake our lord the Prophet; the god turned  
His face and steps to where the third fire burned  
Mid a hushed company, before a maid  
Helmed, with bright eyes and joyous; elders staid  
About her sat, young silent squires observed  
To feed the happy embers, others served  
Her captain's meal of water, meat and bread,  
Waited upon her women, built her bed  
Of new-mown hay and spread their cloaks thereon.  
Within her face illumination shone,  
And when she spoke, unto the prince was known  
The voice of Godhead mingling with her own.

'O tower of ivory, crystal tower of prayer  
And passion, hold'st thou then that hidden stair,'  
The archangel said, 'whereby, since Babel crashed  
And all men's hopes of solid heaven were dashed,  
Their age-long quest hath climbed? Wert thou made wise  
By this devout invasion to surprise  
The young Child, yet console him for his rape?  
How canst thou think to guard him? his escape  
Is by Omniscience plotted, set him free  
Ere yet the thunderbolt shall ravage thee,  
Set free the Child, and pray that thou may'st live,  
If haply the Most Merciful may forgive.'

## *Advent*

Then said the mistress of our destiny :  
' Com'st thou, O head of war, at last to me ?  
Now is no help ; yea, if all men and I  
Repented us, there were no remedy.  
By one sole way shall God return to God,  
Now nine months opened, till which path be trod  
He shall go darkly, from his heaven divorced,  
By pain and hunger shamefully enforced,  
Whom to redeem avails no angel's sword ;  
This is a thing beyond thee, O my lord ;  
The Word of challenge is within me made  
Flesh of my flesh ; by life and death essayed  
Heaven shall he reach again, we with him then.  
Return : with dragons lies thy war, not men.'

And her time came upon her, and she lay  
World-tended : but the prince was caught away,  
And heard the young souls of divine delight,  
Who dawn for ever through deific night,  
Sing ' Peace ' : and saw the cherubim abase  
Before the darkness of the riven Place  
Their helmed and helpless valour, sad to know,  
While the victorious Earth held God below,  
What pain, what death, what solitude should be  
Ere he led captive his captivity.



## *Christmas*

WORD through the world went  
On Christmas morn :  
'Tidings ! behold, a  
Townsmen is born !'

Then in their council  
Smiled the high lords :  
'Sword for world conquest  
Mid a world's swords !  
Need shall our armies  
Have of each birth,  
In the last battle  
Wins us the earth.'

Still stood the priesthood  
Singing the Mass :  
'Yea, is our word come  
Truly to pass ?  
Blessèd and broken  
Crumbs that we give,  
Say : say, O chalice,  
Can a creed live ?'

## *Christmas*

Then while to Shakespeare,  
    Brooding alone,  
In a dark pageant,  
    Lear was shown,  
While his just loathing  
    Hung over men,  
Lo, from the darkness  
    Came Imogen.

Then said a free maid,  
    Heart against mine :  
'Take me, lord governor,  
    Who am all thine.  
Thou that hast blessed me  
    With a new light,  
Ah, is thy handmaid  
    Fair in thy sight? '

Then said our Lady,  
    'Clean is the hut,  
Filled are the platters  
    And the door shut.  
Sit, O son Jesus,  
    Sit thou, sweet friend :  
Poor folk have supper,  
    And their woes mend.'

'Now', said our Father,  
    'All things are won :  
Welcome, O Saviour :  
    Welcome, O Son :

## *Christmas*

More than Creation  
Lives now again :  
God hath borne Godhead  
Nowise in vain !'

Word went through Sarras  
On Easter morn :  
'Tidings, behold a  
Townsmen is born.'

## *The Fourth Dimension*

### I

WHEN the True Fire leapt forth and fell through space  
On the elect, what saved them there from death  
But you, O tender pitiful air, O grace  
Transformed to matter, made our mortal breath?

O their salvation was in your strong wind  
Whose matter dulled God's immaterial fire,  
Whose loving-kindness did his passion bind,  
Or all the world had perished in that pyre.

Thus docilely the tongues of flame sank down,  
And, quenched to visibility, he fell  
Upon their foreheads, a bright flickering crown,  
Who did himself with his soft patience quell.

### II

Your great original he breathed, mild air,  
Whose risen body shone on those elect,  
And did with them your benediction share,  
Yet could their bolted and dark doors neglect.

And delicately into you he passed—  
Restored unto the heavens from which he came  
To be a spark on either touching vast  
Of soul and matter, making them one flame.

## *The Fourth Dimension*

O who but you received him when he ranged  
    Spirit again? what cloud but such, O grace,  
As rose first out of you when you were changed  
    To touch and sight between the poles of space?

O heavenly comfort, blow about us ! steep  
    Souls in your peace as bodies in your care !  
And you, fine lungs of my risen body, deep  
    Breathe you of that mild, fresh, and tender air !

## *Birds*

STARLING to swallow  
Cried, bird to bird :  
'In the sky's hollow  
What is this we heard ?  
What is this descends  
Where our broods fly,  
From the far ends  
Of the sky ?'

Eagle to vulture  
Cried, boldest thought  
To the sepulture  
Where virtue is brought :  
'What is this we saw  
Speedily come  
As the wind's flaw  
Through our home ?'

Wonder outwelling,  
Each in its kind  
Rose from its dwelling  
In my lower mind ;  
All, above this earth  
Of my delight,  
Felt the true worth  
Of their flight.



## *Birds*

All their fast winging,  
This folk of air,  
All their clear singing,  
Circled by the fair  
Mystery of mind,  
Stilled as they knew  
That rushing Wind  
Pass therethrough.

Listening and peeping  
From my tall house,  
Heard I the cheeping  
Amid orchard boughs ;  
Also in the cotes  
Where dwell my loves,  
Heard the soft notes  
Of those doves.

From my farm kitchen,  
Stablished in space,  
Where I sat rich in  
My own time and place,  
Heard I all my doves  
Coo to their kin,  
As to their loves  
Love flew in.

## *Sleep*

[IN A GUEST BOOK]

SLEEP which the Omnipotent  
To man's heaving heart had sent  
Was the one thing here also  
Which Omniscience could not know.

Jealous that his creature knew,  
Delicately then he drew  
Man's soul to so fine a term  
It could hold his loosing firm.

Long to wait did he endure  
Till, strong, terrible, and pure,  
Saw he in a stable shed  
The true eyes and lonely head.

Then, Creation in his heart,  
Delicately to her part  
He accorded : watch she kept,  
And at last Omniscience slept.

## *In an Ecclesiastical Procession*

WHITHER ascend we now with trumpets blowing,  
And banners stiff, and incense flung abroad,  
And priests upon the chanting crowd bestowing  
Blessing, and all the ministers of God?

What eyes are open in this congregation  
To see, beneath the candles' holy fire,  
The victim whom we bring here for oblation,  
Behind the singing children of the choir?

Before the sacrificial priest, bedizened  
With ceremonial garb of antique guise,  
What offering is borne, with cord imprisoned  
And bound with scarves upon his mouth and eyes?

Up to the altar wheels the long succession  
Of figures, moving pathwise with the sun :  
Dreadful our road of ritual progression,  
Who are the heirs of all that priests have done.

Be blind, ye folk ! the knives of ancient slaughter  
Drip redly here beneath the carven Christ.  
Lo, Agamemnon, mourning for his daughter !  
Lo, Hiel with his children sacrificed !

Lo, where the Aztecs reach the blazing altar,  
Lo, where the Druids chapleted pass by !—  
Night is upon us, sing ye lest we falter,  
Knowing what blood herein we justify ;

## *In an Ecclesiastical Procession*

What shrines, what prayers, what terrible oblations,  
What red and overflowing stream that runs  
Throughout these aisles from ancient dispensations ;—  
On us that blood be and upon our sons !

Sing, Christian folk, how for your sins' remission  
Died Innocence, of all these deaths the sum,  
Of the fierce dooms, the guilty lives' perdition,  
Which were his forerunners in heathendom.

The walls dissolve, the walls dissolve about us !  
Jungle and mountain monstrously arise,  
Man's past is dark within us, and without us  
Sparkles from stormy and barbarian eyes.

Sing, Christian folk ! your Christian priest advances,—  
Drown with your chant the noise of wilder drums  
Calling us back to whirl of heathen dances :  
Wheel we and pause we,—lo, the victim comes.

Faster and faster censers swing before us  
Upon the paths our painted fathers trod,  
Louder and louder lifts our tribal chorus,—  
Sing, Christian folk, your Christian hymns to God.

## *Office Hymn*

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. THOMAS DIDYMUS, APOSTLE  
AND SCEPTIC

LORD God, the mystics gather  
To thy familiar tones,  
The sons who know their father  
Assume their judgement thrones.  
With terrible assessors  
Thy seat is thronged about :  
We too are thy confessors,  
Lord, hear us too who doubt !

How can our mind surrender  
Which learns not, nor our heart,  
To find thee fierce or tender,  
Or see thee what thou art ?  
If thou thy face art hiding  
With darkness for a screen,  
Or if thy hand be guiding,  
We know not nor have seen.

What worth should be in trusting ?  
We dare not rest therein,  
Whose faith may be but lusting,  
Whose self-denial sin :

## *Office Hymn*

Yet no wise dare we falter  
In one word,—hear us so !  
We stand before thine altar,  
Denying that we know.

If thou shalt come in thunder,  
And with all evil men  
Whelm us thine anger under,  
While we confess thee then  
Confess thou, ere thou sever  
Us from thy household true,  
Lord God, confess we never,  
Knowing not, swore we knew.



## *Chant Royal of Feet*

(FOR A CEREMONIAL BATHING)

LIE there, my shoes, while, slow and reverently,  
As unto flutes and odes of ritual,  
I dip you, O my feet, dip to the knee,  
Lift you, and watch the purging waters fall  
From the clean limbs, the little ripples shy  
Run swiftly over the curved toes and fly  
To join the pool that washed off the heels' stain,  
And as from pouring hands the last drops drain  
Or either sole does the still surface meet,  
My mouth salutes you with a holy strain :  
Blessing and honour to you, O my feet !

In what close shells and cribs of privacy  
You the laced leather daily does enthrall,  
And limit humbly to attend, *servi*  
*Servorum*, in bond-service menial  
My body's officers of rank more high,  
As the abounding and bewildering eye,  
The capital lungs, the expert nerves a-chain,  
Hands the tax-gatherers,—all these you deign  
To wait on, and their toil at need complete,—  
Yea, and their monarch, the most lonely brain :  
Blessing and honour to you, O my feet !

## *Chant Royal of Feet*

Consider, feet, to how great lineage ye  
Are kin, the serfs of climbing Hannibal  
And they who friended Nelson on his sea ;  
Think to what stools and stairways temporal  
Your strong and slender brethren have drawn nigh,  
Caesar's to Rome, Moses' to Sinai :  
Think on the Ardours who, in flight with twain,  
Veil with twain wings their faces, and again  
Their feet must hide so : think on how the sweet  
Tears upon his the Syrian felt rain.  
Blessing and honour to you, O my feet !

A little sloth, a little apathy,  
Reluctantly to follow on Love's call,  
This is your most offence ! well may you be  
For such delay absolved, who not at all  
By agile hints and provocations sly  
With hot and febrile Fancy do comply,  
Find no sin palatable, get no gain  
As mind or mouth when they their hopes attain.  
Pray, little brothers, but for stronger heat  
Of speed, to follow after Love amain :  
Blessing and honour to you, O my feet !

So may the dryad soul protect her tree,  
Her whole white body, wonderful and tall,  
And you, the bearers of that mystery !  
So may the threads and cordage wherewithal  
God does the knot of a poised beauty tie  
Be never slipped in you nor useless lie !  
So may the pangs and throbs of doleful pain  
Be far from you,—swoln bone or broken, blain,

## *Chant Royal of Feet*

Rheumatic fires, and snare of house or street,—  
And sure your tread be and your road be plain !  
Blessing and honour to you, O my feet !

### ENVOY

Teach, princes, for this song's praise, not in vain,  
If me the high Muse do at all constrain,  
That heavenly equilibrium, that discreet  
Balance of passion whereof song is fain :  
Blessing and honour to you, O my feet !

## *In a Motor-bus*

NARROW and long the motor-bus  
Lumbers round bend on bend :  
My limbs are stiff with standing up,  
Leaning against the end  
For a long hour ; on either side  
From the roof three lamps depend.

This is no car wherein I ride,  
These are not men I see ;  
Narrow and long my coffin is,  
And driven lumberingly,  
As I go onward through the dark  
And Death goes on with me.

These are the churchyard images  
My misty eye beholds ;  
This is no raincoat but a shroud  
My chilly body folds ;  
Whose limbs no mortal heaviness  
But *rigor mortis* holds.

London and God are left behind,  
Far, far behind ; we go  
Down through the dark night and the sleet  
To a cold country woe.  
And if my soul shall yet be saved  
Nor Death nor I can know. . . .

## *In a Motor-bus*

O as my heart beats forward now,  
And hardly does suspire,  
Shall I remember, when indeed  
Death does my soul require,  
How once from Golder's Green we went  
Down into Hertfordshire ?

## *In a London Office*

SEVEN bodies round me spin  
Live tentacles, to snare  
And drag my mind therein  
Out of the open air.

Before me a blank wall  
Is built ; I cannot flee,  
I feel the thin threads crawl  
Tightening over me.

Life is blown through the room  
All round me, a thick smoke ;  
Seven spiders spin my doom,  
In a living shroud I choke.

Ah if I could but find  
That tunnel which (men say)  
Leads from this earthly mind  
Underneath sense, away

To the clear inner land  
And the spiritual sea,  
And the high towns that stand  
Within eternity ;

Where souls can breathe at ease  
The fine salt-sprinkled air,  
In long walks lined with trees  
Or a wide market square.

## *In a London Office*

Ah to be saved so ! But  
Earth piled within me fills  
That tunnel ; I am shut  
From the everlasting hills.

I dig at the entering-in,  
Ere the lives around me press  
My mind, by the cords they spin  
Caught, into nothingness.

Wildly I dig ; above  
The earth falls crumblingly ;  
I feel the thin threads move  
Tightening over me.



## *Three Friends*

PALSY, blindness, death—these three friends I had :  
Blindness shut my eyes lest I should be sad  
For the world's pain or my own sin,  
Lest mind should search without or soul within.

Palsy laid hand upon me lest, my will  
Looking on its task, I should fulfil  
In grief and toil all the works it bade :  
So, trembling, nodding, helpless I stayed.

Death was my chief love, far off dwelled he,  
Comfortable promise sending to me ;  
'Surely I come,' said he, 'quickly to save ;  
Sweet, there is no more living in the grave.'

Woe on the day when blindness passed from me,  
When cruel gods touched and bade me see,  
When Death my love was from me estranged !  
Palsy alone is with me unchanged.

Now can I behold the things I must do.  
Death now no more is the death I knew,  
Who with new life waits for me at end ;  
Palsy alone still is my friend.

## *Three Friends*

If also this pass as they passed,  
And I must walk a friendless man at last,  
Shall I not then long in my pain  
For my blind days and their hope again?

## *‘Thy Will be done’*

‘I prayed for you.’—From a letter.

WHAT hast thou done? what hast thou sought? Alas,  
And what shall the high God who knows thy aim  
And is determined to bring all to pass  
Which by his saints required is in his name,  
What shall he work upon me in delight  
So to fulfil thy purpose and his own?  
O no more sacrifice me, night by night,  
But leave that prayer unto my lips alone!  
For there, by many infidelities,  
My slippery soul from formal plea escapes,  
But thou being once set firmly on thy knees  
Bring'st God's will on me in how many shapes!  
Hallo no more those hounds upon my track:  
They know thy voice; halt, turn, and call them back.

## *Prayer*

TAUGHT by old masters, I from eyes and ears  
Through narrow passages of prayer turn in,  
Seeking to find that peace the world not nears,—  
Alas, to what new roar and rhythmic din :  
Great machines, mighty enginery, huge blows  
Of hammers, till my body's fabric reels  
With inward manufacture down long rows  
Of tall devices, purr of banded wheels ;  
Fibres and clay of being here are brought  
To workshops thick with prongs and furnaced coal,  
Here melted to desire, there fused to thought,  
Here torn and crushed and bubbling into soul.  
But O what rest is here? what place withdrawn  
Where I could lie, and wait, and feel peace dawn?

## *Go not, my Lord*

Go not, my Lord ! why wilt thou fly ?  
Thou canst not fear so much as I !  
What frights thee ? hungry giants ? They  
Shall, when they know thee, beg thee stay.  
Or shrink'st thou from some lurching sloth,  
Some leaping rage ? what is it doth  
Keep thee, fair Child, from coming in ?  
Venture thy hand upon each sin,  
To find they are not foes when once  
Their manes thy touch no longer shuns !

Alas, thou'rt gone : yet 'twas, 'twas thou  
Who shyly looked on me but now,  
In distance safe, and would not come,  
For all device, to thy new home :  
Too rough, too strange, this heart appears  
For thee, my God, to quell thy fears !

What can I show thee, what can say  
That shall at all persuade thee stay,  
If thou shouldst come again ? what toy  
Shall serve, what dainties, princely boy ?  
Rather be tempted upon me  
To exercise thy bravery,

## *Go not, my Lord*

Pluck up good heart, upon these rude  
Wild aboriginals intrude !  
Before those young courageous eyes,  
Once thou art in, all peril flies,  
And thou shalt find this world to be  
The land thy Mother promised thee !

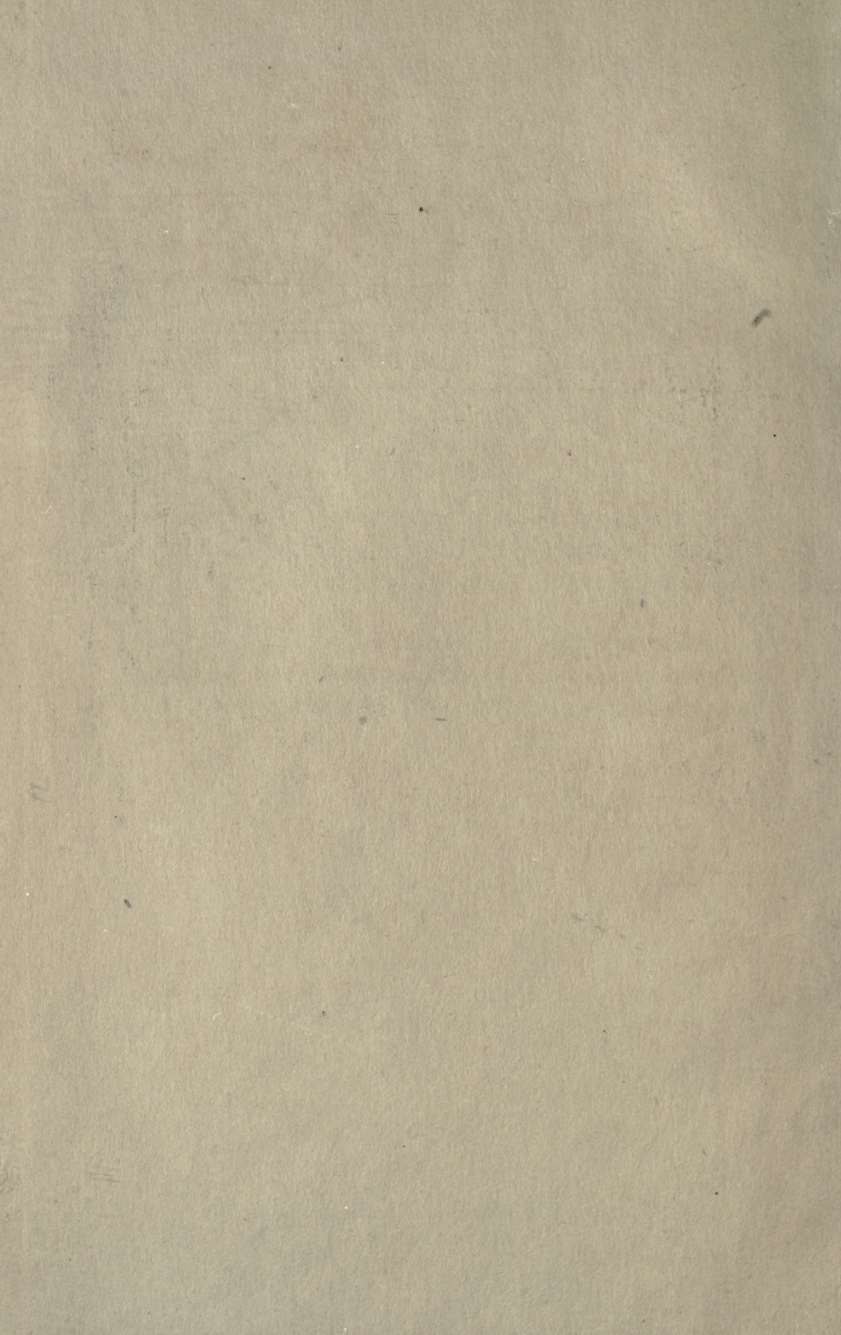
## *Envoy*

WHO shall care for these verses when a few men are dead,  
In a month when the last word, whate'er it be, is said,  
That lifts up amid living names my else-forgotten head?

Nay, how shall they for even so long be prosperous? Likelier  
Seems it I sole shall hear them, as a man hears the whirr  
In afternoon, beside his path, of the unseen grasshopper.







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